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**Christus in Ecclesia.** By HASTINGS RASHDALL, D.LITT., D.C.L. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. Pp. xii + 364. \$1.50.

**Through Man to God.** By GEORGE A. GORDON. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Pp. ix + 395. \$1.50.

**Quiet Talks about Jesus.** By S. D. GORDON. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Pp. 290. \$0.75.

**Rests by the River.** By GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., LL.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Pp. xvi + 367. \$1.25.

**The Pilgrim's Hospice.** By REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Co. Pp. xii + 119.

In these five books we have representative types of religious thought and presentation. *Christus in Ecclesia* is a volume of sermons preached for the most part in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn. They seek to explain in a rational manner what has been called the "institutional" side of Christianity. Here are some of the topics: The Idea of the Church, The Holy Eucharist, Baptism, Apostolic Succession, Matter and Manner of Prayer, Origin of Sunday, Revelation and the Bible, Church and State. Ordinary themes, but the preacher has in mind the pivotal inquiry of sincere thought and the vital lines along which the inquiry must be met. Every sermon furnishes rich disclosure of fine insight. There is the acuteness of the profound thinker, the breadth and polish of the scholar, the fairness and practicality of common-sense. The following sentence will locate the preacher ecclesiastically: "For us here and now in England, the best and fullest realization of the church idea is the Church of England, and we shall best promote unity by belonging to it." American Protestantism will dissent from this, but will follow the demands which he makes upon the church, rejection of apostolical succession, the idea of magic in the sacraments, his call for a recognition of the Protestant Bodies as branches of the true church, their ministers as true Christian presbyters, and there comes into the mind of the reader a willingness, a gladness to consider this side of the presentation. He is an ideal broad churchman. The whole discussion is in thorough sympathy with the modern historical critical method. He says: "I believe it is impossible to teach the people clearly what the Bible is unless we sometimes say also, with some plainness of speech, what the Bible is not." Virility, culture, breadth, spiritual intuition; these, with a style that perfectly corresponds, make the book an exceptional stimulus to the sincere seeker after the whole, round truth.

Dr. George A. Gordon's book, by variety a good companion volume to the former, confines itself to one persistent theme. He has followed

Chalmer's habit to perfection. He has turned the idea, "Through Man to God," round and round and jotted down in these twenty sermons every scintillation. "The incarnation of God in Jesus, the perfect man, in all men as moral beings, in all good men as the life of their life, is the fundamental idea in my philosophy of existence." The germinal thought of the book was given to the author as his mind protested against the conception of John Fiske in his little Volume *Through Nature to God*. His protest was not against the isolated ideas of the book but the plan expressed in the title. "Shall we construe the character of the Eternal by what is lowest or by what is highest, by the beast of prey or by the apostle of love?" All through the discussion he works on the theory of Evolution as a sure basis. "The race started with nothing and with a heavy inheritance from the animal." "Man is made by the entrance of God into the animal." "Christianity is the sovereign possession of the race; it is the product of the humanity of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Gordon is not a controversialist. He does not bring up the several doctrines of the church, as held formerly, and try to confute or modify them, accepting this, rejecting that. One often wishes he would consider possible difficulties lying in the way. He has a few fundamental convictions and builds up straightway and positively on those. He loves to be winging his way to an ideal. Like Phillips Brooks he keeps to what he considers centralities and lets the wealth of his philosophy, knowledge, and imagination luxuriate along those given lines. Indeed, there is a suggestion of Brooks and Emerson all the while. He is more of a philosopher than Brooks and less of a mystic and poet; but in the sermon "Toward Evening" he is all three in splendid exaltation. He is at times fanciful, as in "The Servant of Abraham;" but it is a fancy that discovers beautiful fragrant lessons for today blossoming in old historic roadways. These sermons preached in the New Old South will find a response in any such environment; for the antipodes of Back Bay there will seem to be too large a proportion of angel food and too little plain fare that can be tucked away in the workman's dinner pail.

*Quiet Talks about Jesus* is a book of an altogether different style. It will come nearer reaching that antipodal class. One feels in reading there is an audience present; and the seats are probably all filled. It is the style of the magnetic platform evangelist of the higher type. There is no discount on his intellectual strength, penetrative vision, willingness to study details, keenness of scent for subtle suggestions, imagination that can do swift picture work in the handiest kind of etching. He is a master of the "catchy statement" which he speaks of slightly. So far as style goes,

here is his power; if only there is added to it phenomenal exuberance, flashing into the perpetually unexpected. The delight in the nimbleness of his thought frequently leads him not only to confusion of figure, and a gratuitous supply of improvised fact, but also to be pert when handling serious material. E. g., in speaking on the Transfiguration, he says, "It is dear, impulsive old Peter who can't keep still, even amid such a scene. His impulsive heart is just back of his lips, with no check valve between. He must offer a few remarks."

The author claims to have no theory about Jesus, but simply tries to tell what he finds in the old Book of God. Beginning with the purpose of Jesus' coming, he goes back to Eden, to the tragic break and the results of the break. Then he takes up the person of Jesus, human, divine, winsome; then the great experiences from the decisive start at the Jordan to his Ascension. Along this series of events his mind travels and the reader gets the benefit of the interpretative, homiletical hints, flashes, and suggestions that leap forth on every side. He knows human nature thoroughly; the deeps of its trouble; how to get at it. He has helped great masses of men. The fifty-fifth thousand edition of one book and the eighty-fifth thousand edition of another prove him to be a man who can talk religion and hold the attention of the crowd. But even this leaves something yet to be desired. The book is closed with the wish that the author would go a little farther; when he deals with allegory, parable, picture, why treat it as literal history and continue the same in his own amplification; why not explain in accurate prose speech of the day. He has the verbal power to do so; and the number of common people asking for plain, Anglo-Saxon, modern version of ancient vernacular is increasing.

Dr. Matheson's book, *Rests by the River*, is fully up to the level of the other "Meditations." There are one hundred and four themes, the handling of each occupying about three pages. The author still believes that devotional moments do not mean moments of vacuity. "Religious sentiment must be preceded by religious perception." The interpretation and the prayers cannot but lift the soul into spiritual mood. The author may appear to have an ambition, almost an itching of soul, to give a new turn to an old expression. Sometimes his unusual renderings are fanciful; but these little unforeseen turns lead to mountain paths of wondrous outlook and down into most fertile valleys of rich experience. His physical blindness reacted on his inner vision to make it all the keener.

*The Pilgrims' Hospice* is classified by the author in the Preface where he speaks of "the ineffable mystery of the Holy Communion." The author says: "This little book propounds no theory." Does he not know

that a phrase, a word, may propound a theory? The book contains ten addresses, probably used preparatory to the Communion. In opening, he blends Christ's "Come unto me" with Thomas à Kempis' paraphrase, and considers the church a Hospice, an inn by the wayside, and the Holy Supper a feast for the refreshment of weary pilgrims. In a sweet, quiet way he leads the mind to dwell upon "Preparing the Guest Chamber," "Purging out the Old Leaven," "The Covenant of Blood," "The Covenant of Hospitality." Those who agree with the author as to "the ineffable mystery" may get great comfort from his free, parable roaming. There are others who want and who must have a straight cleavage to the central nucleus, simple fact. Does the Lord's Supper mean transubstantiation, consubstantiation? Or does it mean a symbolic memorial service which an ordinarily intelligent man can apprehend.

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